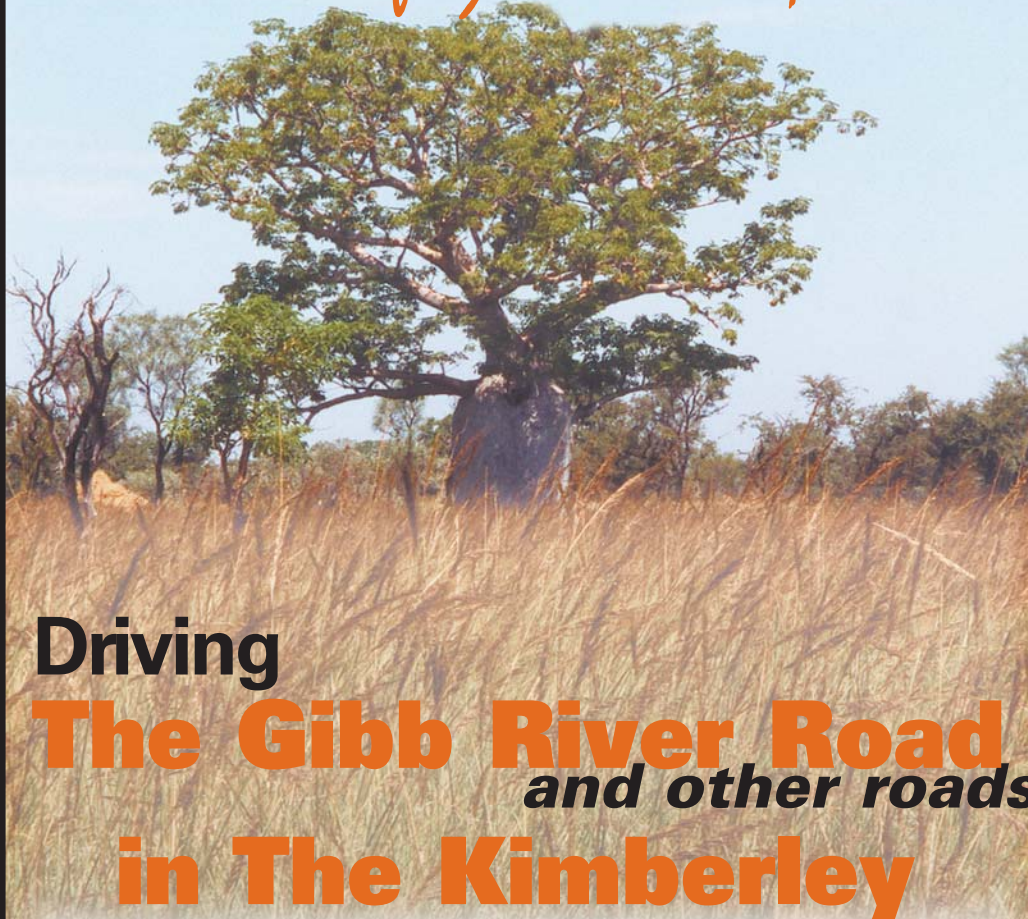


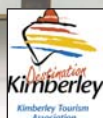
Your Road Safety Survival Guide to:



Driving
The Gibb River Road
and other roads
in The Kimberley

GIBB RIVER ROAD	
WYNDHAM - PENTECOST RIVER	4 WHEEL DRIVE ONLY 3t
PENTECOST RIVER - KALUMBURU T/O	CLOSED
MT. BARNETT - DERBY	OPEN
KALUMBURU ROAD	
GIBB RIVER ROAD - DRYSDALE RIVER	CLOSED
THEDA STATION - KALUMBURU	CLOSED

FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON ROAD CONDITIONS PHONE 1800 013 314





WELCOME TO THE KIMBERLEY

On behalf of the West Australian Police Service I welcome you to the Kimberley Region of Western Australia. I trust your stay with us will be both enjoyable and safe.

The Kimberley has some of the world's most beautiful scenic locations, these magnificent natural wonders however usually only occur in areas of awe inspiring isolation, and inhospitable terrain.

The harshness of the terrain was most dramatically highlighted in a 3-day period in December 2003, when, in separate incidents, two stranded British tourists, in strikingly similar situations, reacted to their plight in dramatically different ways, with tragic results for one.

Both persons, driving rental 4 Wheel Drive vehicles, became bogged in soft sand many kilometres away from any settlement. The driver of the vehicle in the Pilbara Region chose to walk from his vehicle in an attempt to reach help. He quickly became dehydrated, and sadly died whilst attempting the 3 day walk to apparent safety.

The driver of the vehicle in the Kimberley, in direct contrast, chose to remain with his vehicle and conserve the 12 litres of water he had taken with him. He constructed a signal fire, and wrote a 40-metre S.O.S. message in the sand. After a period of 2 days he was spotted by a Coastwatch surveillance aircraft and was

then rescued suffering no ill effects.

If you are planning an expedition into isolated areas the Police ask that you abide by some simple guidelines that will contribute to the safe conduct of your trip. These are:

- Take sufficient food and water, always allow for unforeseen emergencies.
- If possible travel in pairs, using a supporting vehicle.
- File a travel plan with relatives or friends, advising them of your route, destination, vehicle details, passengers, and expected arrival date. Advise your friends to contact Police if you don't arrive at your destination within a reasonable time period.
- If stranded don't panic, remain with your vehicle and conserve energy and water.
- Construct a visible signal to would be rescuers, This could be writing in the sand, rocks arranged on the ground or a small smoky signal fire.

Please take the time to read this excellent publication "Driving the Gibb River Road and Other Roads in the Kimberley" It could save your life.

**S.R. ROBBINS
SUPERINTENDENT
KIMBERLEY DISTRICT OFFICE**



*TURN TO PAGE 22 TO SEE HOW YOU CAN
RECEIVE A FREE GIFT!*

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- Have you told anyone where you are going and how long you will be?
- Is your vehicle in good mechanical condition?
- How well do you know your vehicle?
- Have you driven a 4 wheel drive vehicle before?
- Do you have plenty of water and food?
- Do you have at least two spare tyres?
- Are you competent at driving on unsealed roads?
- Do you know what speed you should be doing on unsealed roads?
- Do you know what to do if your vehicle starts to slide sideways on the gravel?
- Do you know what to do when crossing a waterway?
- Do you know what to do if you get bogged?
- Do you know what to do in case of emergency?

*If you cannot answer 'yes' to all of these questions
you should read on for your own safety.....*



Every year in the Kimberley travellers have their holidays ruined either by a road crash or misadventure due to not being prepared.

- *There have been 7 deaths on the Gibb River Road since 1993*
- *80% of crashes (since 1993) have been a single vehicle roll over type crashes.*

Don't you be the next! It's worth taking the time to plan your trip before you go and to take care when driving on unsealed sections of road. You will then have a great trip and an unforgettable experience travelling through some of the most beautiful and wondrous scenery in the Kimberley.

Road Safety: Its your responsibility

Road Safety is your responsibility. This guide provides you with the basic information you will need to reduce your road risks whilst travelling the Gibb River Road and other unsealed roads in the Kimberley. You should refer to specialist 4WD publications for further information.



- **Check the Road Condition:** Always check the condition of the road before departing. Phone the Main Roads Condition Report free call number below to get the latest road conditions.

1800 013 314

You may also need to check with the local Shire for local road conditions (phone number found on back page).

- **Let Someone Know:** Always inform someone of your planned journey and estimated time of arrival. Remember that driving times vary depending upon the condition of the road, driving habits, experience and type of vehicle. Always make sure you let that person know when you have arrived safely. Do this for each leg of your trip.
- **Your Vehicle:** Know the limitations of your vehicle. Four wheel drive vehicles have a higher centre of gravity. Do not take 2WD vehicles on 4WD tracks. Have your car fully serviced before you leave. Take at least two spare tyres with you, as well as a current detailed and accurate map.



- **Fuel:** Unleaded/lead replacement and LPG is not always available in some remote areas. Check with the fuel distributors or the tourist information office before you leave. You may need to take jerry cans with extra fuel. Make sure these are stored securely and the lid is tight to avoid leakage on rough roads.

- **Water/Food:** Take approximately 9 litres of water per adult per day. You should take enough extra water and food to last 2-3 days past your intended travel time. - Be aware, there can be large distances between food outlets.

- **Emergency Equipment:** You should consider taking the following items with you, in case of emergency:
 1. **First aid kit,**
 2. **Fire extinguisher,**
 3. **Recovery gear,** including a snatch strap or a load rated rope
 4. **EPIRB**
(Electronic Position Indicator Radio Beacon)
 5. **Satellite Phone**
 6. **H.F. Radio**



Turn Your Headlights On

Always drive with your headlights on low beam during the daytime so that you may be easily seen by oncoming traffic or when you approach another vehicle from behind.

Floodways & Creek/River Crossings

At floodways, creek crossings or when water is across the road surface, you should always stop the car to check the water depth and how fast the water is flowing before attempting to cross. Always wade across to check the water depth, however, do not enter the water if there is the possibility of crocodiles in the vicinity. We recommend walking both tyre tracks to check for submerged logs and debris. As a general rule, if you cannot stand in the water then it is flowing too fast to cross. It is not necessarily the depth of the water, but rather the speed that will cause problems when crossing floodways and creek crossings. You should also determine if the water is rising or falling. Floodways in the Kimberley often rise and fall quickly and if you wait patiently the water will eventually drop enough to cross safely. To cross safely we recommend the water depth should be no more than 50cm (for an average adult - about knee high) for most 4WD vehicles and less than 20cm for 2WD vehicles.

If in doubt, DO NOT attempt to cross.



What to do in an Emergency

In the event of an emergency in a remote area, (such as a break down or if you get bogged, always **STAY WITH YOUR VEHICLE**. Searchers, especially aerial searchers, are more likely to see your vehicle than you. Your vehicle will also provide you with shelter from the sun and other elements.

Your vehicle is also where your stores of food and water are (you will only be able to carry enough for a couple of days if you set off on foot). Many travellers have been known to die in remote areas simply because they have left their vehicle.

Weather/Best time to Travel:

The Kimberley has two distinct seasons the wet (Dec-April) and the dry season (May-Nov). Most unsealed roads are impassable during the wet season. Plan to take your trip between May and Nov.

Always phone the Main Roads WA Road Condition Report Number (1800 013 314) before departing on each leg of your trip, even if you are travelling in the dry season. Remember, you can be fined up to \$200 under the Main Roads Act and local Shire by-laws for driving on roads that are signed closed. Your vehicle will not be covered by insurance if you put in a claim for damage that occurred on a closed section of road.



What to do if you get bogged

Should you get bogged try the following:

- Engage 4WD if you haven't already. (Remember to lock your hubs if need be)
- Try reversing out.
- Let some air out of your tyres and try to drive out.
- Place sticks, bushes and spinifex under the front tyres then try and drive out.
- Wait with your vehicle for another vehicle to come along and pull you out using a snatch strap or load rated rope. Do not use the tow ball as an anchor point. If you are still bogged, stay with your vehicle until help arrives.

Tyres

Unsealed roads in the Kimberley have very sharp rocks, which can easily puncture tyres. Ensure that you take at least two spare tyres, extra tubes, tyre repair kit and an air compressor. Instructions on how to change your tyre will be in the vehicle manual. Choose a suitable place to change your tyre so you can be easily seen by oncoming traffic. A flat, straight section of road is the best place. Pull off the road and use your hazard lights.



Fatigue

Many serious and fatal crashes are caused by driver's falling asleep at the wheel. With the long distances travelled in the Kimberley, fatigue is a very real road safety risk.

Tips to avoid fatigue:

- Plan your trip to include regular rest stops (at least every 2 hours).
- Take water to drink along the way. Dehydration is a common cause of fatigue.
- Avoid driving at night and especially when you would normally be sleeping. Your chances of crashing are much higher at night.
- Get a good nights sleep the night before driving.
- Swap drivers regularly if possible.
- Do not consume alcohol before driving and at rest breaks and avoid drinking too much alcohol the night before.
- If you are feeling tired pull off the road and have a sleep - it's the only cure.



Fires and Smoke

It is quite common to see bush fires during the dry season in the Kimberley. The Station owners burn off the bush to encourage new growth during the wet season to feed their stock. The fire and smoke from these fires can be a hazard to the motorist.

Fires can burn right up to the edge of the road making it dangerous to drive through. The smoke from these fires is very thick and you can lose total visibility. It's a good idea to turn your headlights on low beam to improve your visibility.

Do not attempt to drive through thick smoke. Stop the car and wait for the smoke to clear before moving forward. If there is a breeze this should not take too long. Use the time to take a break and have a cup of tea or coffee.

Tips for Driving on Unsealed Roads

Unsealed surfaces are unpredictable and caution must be taken at all times!

- Try to drive in the tracks carved out by other vehicles.
- It is recommended that you change over to 4WD in high range (4H) when travelling on unsealed sections of road for better traction. (Remember to lock your hubs if need be).
- Remember to disengage 4WD when you return to sealed road.



SPEED: You should always drive to the conditions of the road. If the road is corrugated, has multiple potholes, is winding with many corners or soft loose gravel - **reduce your speed**. Remember that you will not be able to drive at the same speed as on a sealed road. It will take you longer to get to your destination.

CORRUGATIONS: Driving on corrugations can be quite hazardous. Always be cautious and slow down when rounding curves as speed may cause loss of traction and control of your vehicle or trailer. Try to avoid overtaking on corrugations - be patient, an opportunity will arise.



OVERTAKING: Use your headlights (low beam) when approaching a vehicle from behind. DO NOT overtake if the visibility is poor. Make sure you have plenty of clear straight road in front of you and remember some road trains can have up to 4 trailers, so give yourself enough distance to pass safely. If you have a CB radio try contacting the truck driver to let them know you are behind. After overtaking, try to get a reasonable distance ahead before moving back to your side of the road. This will avoid windscreen damage.

SKIDDING: Probably the greatest hazard when driving on unsealed roads is loss of control due to skidding. A skid can develop quickly and is usually due to the driver changing speed or direction.

A rear wheel skid is the most common and can occur when travelling too fast through a curve, or when braking on a curve or a slippery surface.

To correct a rear wheel skid:

- Do not apply the brakes
- Ease off the accelerator, gently but not completely



Tips for Driving on Unsealed Roads

- Steer gently towards the side the rear wheels are skidding
- Straighten the steering as soon as the vehicle straightens out
- Gently re- apply accelerator.

A front wheel skid usually occurs on a curve or bend when the vehicle is moving too fast to maintain traction with the road surface, particularly on gravel. The vehicle will continue to travel in a straight line instead of turning.

To correct a front wheel skid:

- Ease your foot off the accelerator
- Straighten the front wheels
- Brake **gently** to reduce speed
- When control is regained, turn the front wheels in the desired direction.

A four wheel skid is usually caused by heavy braking. All wheels will lock up and stop rotating.

To correct a four wheel skid:

- Ease off the brake pedal for a moment
- Gently re-apply the brakes
- If the wheels lock up again, repeat the process.

Tips for Driving on Unsealed Roads

STRAYING ANIMALS:

Straying stock and wildlife are often found on roads in the Kimberley. Keep alert for animals on or near the road, especially at dusk and dawn. Avoid travelling at night if possible. If an animal appears on the road in front of you brake firmly in a straight line and sound your horn. Do not swerve, aim to pass behind the animal.



TOWING CARAVANS/CAMPER TRAILERS:

It is not recommended that you tow a caravan on unsealed roads in the Kimberley. If you wish to take a camper trailer it is advised that it have 4WD tyres with a high clearance and be built to withstand corrugations and a rough road surface.



DUST

Driving on unsealed roads will always produce dust.

- Always drive with your headlights on low beam, this will make you more visible to oncoming traffic and traffic ahead of you.
- Never overtake someone if you cannot see what is coming the other way through the dust. Be patient, reduce your speed and stay alert-you may catch up to the vehicle in front but not see them through the dust.
- Do not stop unnecessarily as there maybe another vehicle behind you. If you need to stop pull right off the road.
- Do not move to the centre of the road, stay on the left hand side at all times.
- Dust can linger in the air if there is no wind. If dust lingers, keep your speed to a minimum until you have clear vision and remember- **BE PATIENT.**

TAKE IT SLOWLY AND ENJOY THE SCENERY.

Road Signs

- **Regulatory Signs**



These signs are red and/or black on a white background. You must, by law, abide by what the sign tells you to do.

- **Warning/Advisory signs**

These signs are black on a yellow background. They indicate hazards ahead. You should adjust your driving speed accordingly and be prepared for what is ahead. Hazards are not always signposted and road conditions can change quickly, be alert for hazards at all times.



When these signs indicate a suggested speed, the speed is set for **DRY** conditions - lower your speed even more if the road is wet.



- **Seatbelts**

All drivers and passengers travelling on Western Australian roads are required to wear seatbelts. Ensure all occupants of the vehicle are wearing a seatbelt even when driving on remote bush tracks, for their own safety. Infants under 12 months of age must be restrained in an approved child restraint.

- **Alcohol**

If you are going to drink - don't drive!

A driver cannot, by law, be in control of a vehicle with a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of **0.05%** or above. Even small amounts of alcohol can affect your ability to control a vehicle. Police patrol roads regularly and can test a driver at random for alcohol consumption.

- **Keep Left**

All traffic on two lane roads in Australia must travel to the left of the carriageway.

Aboriginal Land/Private Property

The land either side of an unsealed road is private property, even when it is not fenced. If you wish to travel on any roads other than the Gibb River Road, Kalumburu Road, Mitchell Plateau Road, Mornington Road, Tanami Track, Cape Leveque Road, Bungle Bungle Road or the sign posted gorge and beach access roads, you will need to seek permission from the owners. A permit is required to travel on roads over Aboriginal land. This permit should be obtained from the Department of Indigenous Affairs before your trip. Please contact them in Kununurra on (08) 9168 2550 or Broome on (08) 9192 2865 well before your departure date.

Contact tourist centres for further information.



*Return this form now
and receive a free RoadWise pack!
Feedback Form 2005*

Please help us improve this guide for future years. We would be very grateful if you could take the time to complete this short questionnaire, tear off and either post to us or drop off at your nearest Kimberley Visitor Centre.

1. How did you obtain a copy of this guide? (Tick one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tourist Bureau/information | <input type="checkbox"/> Service Station |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Police Station | <input type="checkbox"/> Shire Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tourist brochure | <input type="checkbox"/> Hire car |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Affairs Dept | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

2. How useful was this guide? (tick one)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very useful | <input type="checkbox"/> Not very useful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Useful | <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all useful |

3. Do you think this guide helped you improve your driving skills on unsealed roads? Yes No

4. Tick the sections you have found useful?

- | | |
|---|--|
| Remote trip planning | Tips for driving on unsealed roads |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check the road condition | <input type="checkbox"/> Speed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Let someone know | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your vehicle | <input type="checkbox"/> Corrugations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel | <input type="checkbox"/> Skidding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water/food | <input type="checkbox"/> Straying animals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Towing caravans/camper trailers |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Dust |

4. Continued..

Road Safety Survival Tips

- Headlights
- Floodways & creek crossings
- Weather/ best time to travel
- What to do if you get bogged
- Tyres
- Fatigue
- Fires and smoke

Other

- Road Signs
- Road Rules
- Aboriginal Land/Private Property
- Contact Numbers
- Travellers Register
- Other _____

5. Do you have any other suggestions or comments about this guide?

*Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
Please drop off at your nearest Kimberley Visitor Centre or post your
completed questionnaire to:*

**RoadWise Officer
C/- Shire of Broome
PO Box 44
Broome WA 6725**

Please fill in your name and address below to receive your free gift:

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
_____ POSTCODE: _____





EMERGENCY: Police/Fire/Ambulance	000
Tourist Information Centres	
Kununurra Visitor Centre	9168 1177
Wyndham Tourist Information	9161 1281
Halls Creek Visitor Centre	9168 6262
Fitzroy Crossing Visitor Centre	9191 5355
Derby Visitor Centre	9191 1426
Broome Visitor Centre	9192 2222
Local Shire Offices	
Shire of Broome	9191 3456
Shire of Derby /West Kimberley	9191 0999
Shire of Halls Creek	9168 6007
Shire of Wyndham /East Kimberley	9168 4100
Police	
Kununurra Police Station	9166 4530
Wyndham Police Station	9161 1055
Derby Police Station	9191 1444
Halls Creek Police Station	9168 6000
Fitzroy Crossing Police Station	9191 5000
Broome Police Station	9194 0200
Argyle Police Station	9167 1292
Main Roads Western Australia	
Derby (Regional Office)	9158 4333
Kununurra	9168 1755
Road Condition Report	1800 013 314
Damaged Road Signs Report	1800 800 009



Shire of
Derby/West Kimberley



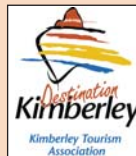
For further information please contact:

RoadWise Officer
Kimberley Region
PO Box 44
Broome WA 6725
Ph: (08) 9191 3456
Mob: 0419 192 759
Email: roadwise@broome.wa.gov.au.

Customer Services Manager
Main Roads Western Australia
PMB 959
Derby WA 6728
Ph: (08) 9158 4333
Email: kimreg@mainroads.wa.gov.au
Website: www.mainroads.wa.gov.au

Local Tourist Information Office
(see list of contact numbers inside guide)

Local Shire Council
(see list of contact numbers inside guide)



April 2005